History of the Present St Mary's Church in Weymouth, Dorset

Digital version of history published in 1967 for the church's 150th anniversary

By Gordon J Scriven

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FOREWORD by the Rev. Canon M. H. Garner, M.A.

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FOREWORD

I have enjoyed reading Mr. Gordon Scriven's history of St. Mary's, Weymouth, since the building of the new Church in 1817. It is a good mixture of facts, figures, personalities and anecdotes. Every one will find something in it to interest them and most people will find a great deal.

Mr. Scriven has shown his keenness for his task by his thorough researches, and we are much indebted to him for putting into permanent shape this record of the life of our Church, in which he himself has taken an active part as Verger for more than twenty years.

As an Evangelical Church at least for these 150 years of its total life of nearly 700, St. Mary's has been a place where men and women have been blessed through the fervent preaching of the Word of God and the faithful administration of the Sacraments without undue ceremonial.

We can be glad that this has been so during periods of moral laxity as well as Victorian strictness; of economic distress as well as of great prosperity; of terrible wartime suffering as well as of peace; of spiritual decline and the erosion of the Protestant character of the Church of England, as well as of spiritual revival and missionary initiative. But in giving thanks to God for the past we must beware of complacency.

As we read our history we may well respond to the call: " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits," but we should also take note of another Word of the Lord which says: " Remember ye **not** the former things (i.e., don't dwell in them) . . . behold, I will do a new thing."

39 Melcombe Avenue, WEYMOUTH, Dorset.
M. H. GARNER, Rector

PREFACE

In seeking to prepare an account of the affairs of the Parish Church to perpetuate the 150th anniversary of its consecration, I found that I had set myself a task which has proved to be profoundly interesting, and a labour which seemed difficult to terminate if confined to what I trust will be a readable narrative for all who love the work of our Church, and for the many visitors who throng our town year by year.

This effort must not be regarded as a complete history of St. Mary's, as I have selected such material as I believe to be of general interest. For those who wish to know more of the available history of our three Churches commencing in A.D. 1299, I would suggest that you obtain a copy of " A Brief History of the Parish Church of St. Mary, Weymouth," first published in June 1958. This can be obtained at the Church at 1/- per copy.

Needless to say I am indebted to many sources of information apart from incomplete records of the period available in the Church archives. Amongst those who have willingly helped me in this direction I must express a warm sense of gratitude to the proprietors of " The Western Gazette," the Assistant Diocesan Archivist, the Curator of the County Museum at Dorchester, and Mr. J. A. C. West, Chief Librarian of Weymouth Borough Library, and other willing helpers from outside the confines of the Parish who have so kindly answered my many letters of enquiry, giving me as much detail as was available. In particular 1 owe very much to the late Mr. Ernest Bussell (a former Churchwarden of St. Mary's) who loaned me a large collection of Parish magazines.

Mr. Graham Herbert, the well-known local photographer has also given expert advice and produced first-rate reproductions of old photographs and I must thank Messrs Jeffery Bros. (Printers) Ltd., for their satisfactory production of

the work, and particularly Mr. Leonard Brown for his helpful advice and guidance regarding all matters concerned with the printing of the book.

Finally, I would thank most sincerely Canon M. H. Garner, the present Rector for his personal encouragement, and I hope that the finished product will be regarded as a conscientious attempt to contribute once again something which may help to maintain the fine traditions of an Evangelical Parish Church.

January 1967.

It is my earnest prayer that all readers of this work in the days to come will find their hearts and minds turned to Almighty God, and will seek to honour and extend His purposes of grace for a needy world.

GORDON J. SCRIVEN

CHAPTER I THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW ERA

By the end of the eighteenth century Melcombe Regis Parish Church had become a place falling into decay and dangerous for the use of its many worshippers. It was called " Christ Church," having been consecrated in 1606, and by the year 1815 had served as the Civic Church of the Borough of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis for well over two hundred years. The then Rector, Dr. Thomas Wyndham, together with his senior curate, the Rev. William Gorton, had realised the practical impossibility of maintaining the building in anything like serviceable condition, and although there were many parishioners who shared their desire for something more in keeping with the needs of the ever growing population of Melcombe Regis, there were certain stubborn individuals who maintained that the Parish Church would last for at least another century!

However, following pressure from influential gentlemen and members of Parliament, the needs of the clergy for necessary development of spiritual work in Melcombe Regis prevailed, and legislation was enacted for the pulling down of the old church and the building of a new edifice, the required Act of Parliament being sanctioned on 7th June, 1815. The battle of Waterloo had been fought and won that summer, and His Majesty King George III was still the reigning sovereign. The long protracted wars with France had impoverished the nation and perhaps it would seem an inopportune time to consider the building of a large parish church to seat at least 2,000 people.

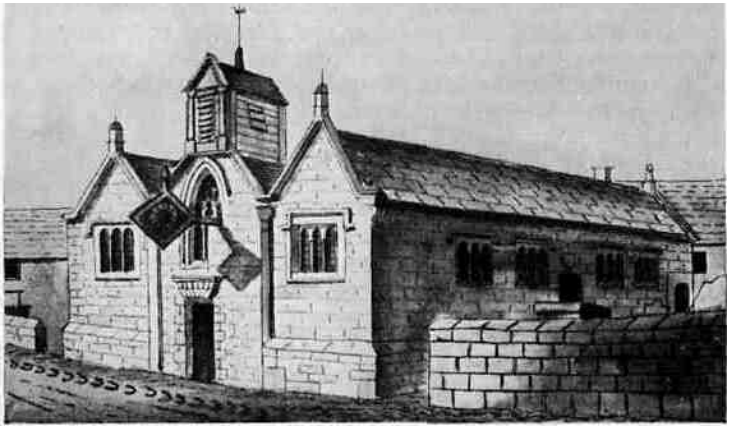
A noted local architect, James Hamilton, was entrusted with the task and the foundation stone was laid on the 4th October, 1815. Weymouth residents are familiar with the King's statue on the Esplanade, another product of Hamilton's imagination.

A body of seventy trustees was set up, all of whom were

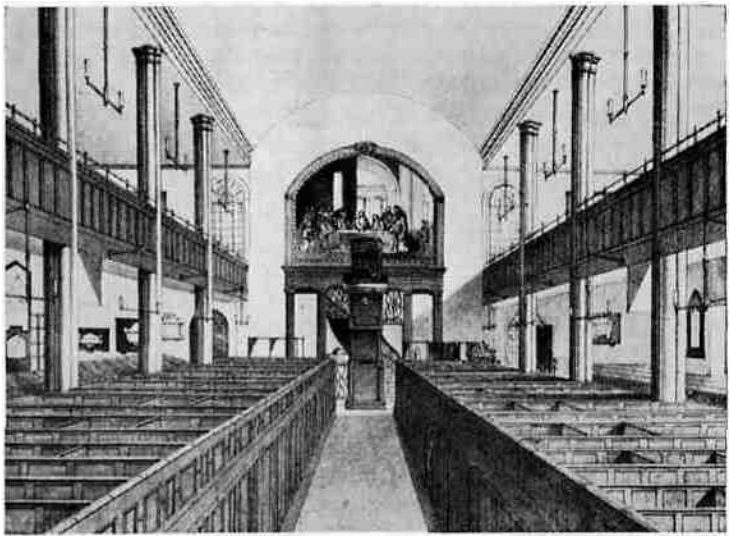
required to be inhabitants of Melcombe Regis, and it is not surprising that James Hamilton himself was amongst the privileged and responsible group. Research has not revealed the name of the building contractors, and it would seem that Hamilton not only directed the work but also provided and organised the labour force.

It must be remembered that from 1542 to 1836 the whole of Dorset was part of the diocese of Bristol, and exhaustive enquiries have failed to discover many of the basic facts concerning the coming into being of the new church of Melcombe Regis. Many valuable ecclesiastical documents were destroyed during the Bristol riots of the early nineteenth century and certain other papers relating to Dorset churches housed at Blandford for the diocese of Bristol, were completely lost in a great fire in the eighteenth century.

Thomas Wyndham, the Rector since 1809, held the patronage of the living jointly with William Wyndham until the year 1840. He also held a benefice at Pimperne, Dorset, and another in the diocese



Melcombe Regis Parish Church (1605)



Melcombe Regis Parish Church (1811 —interior

of Winchester, and when in 1842, returns were sent to the Bishop of Salisbury, his place of residence was shown as Christchurch, Hants. On 29th January, 1840 the Advowson was transferred to the Rev. Edmund Hollond of Benhall Lodge in the County of Suffolk. It was Edmund Hollond who in 1850 laid the foundation stone of St. John's Parish Church, Weymouth, and endowed the trustees of that church with the sum of £25 per annum.

Amongst those who contributed generous sums for the building of the new Church in 1815 were the following:—

Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales	£105
The Lord Bishop of Bristol	£10
The Lord Bishop of Salisbury	£5/5/-
Rev. George Chamberlaine, Rector of Weymouth upon condition " that 500 open sittings be appropriated free of expence to the Poor Inhabitants of the United Borough of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis."	£500

John Herbert Browne Esq.	£200
General Thomas Garth	£105
Mrs. Frances Steward, towards the expenses of ttie organ	£100
Right Hon Thomas Wallace, M.P.	£100
Christopher Idle Esq., M.P.	£100
William Williams Esq., M.P.	£100
Thomas Fowell Buxton, Esq., M.P.	£100
George Purling Esq.	£100
Mrs. Martha Guppy and a service of Communion Plate	£100
Masterton Ure Esq., M.P.	£50
Colonel Dalrymple. M.P.	£50
Giles Templeman Esq., Recorder of Weymouth	£50
The Rev. Dr. Bishop, Rector of Mells	£50
John Wiltshire Esq.	£50
Stephen White Warne Esq.	£50
Robert Gear Esq., London	£50
Mr. Robert Vining	E31/10/-
Lieut. Colonel Cooper	£25
Messrs. Mountain Scott & Co.. proprietors of the Union Coach	£20
Revd. Robert Marriott. Rector of Broadway	£10/10/-
Revd. Archdeacon England	£10
Revd. John Williams, Rector of Marston	£10
Revd. H. F. Yeatman	£10
Mr Taylor	£5/5/-
Mrs. Jas. Taylor	£10/10/-
Revd. *J*. H. Wyndham	£5/5/-
Mr. Daniel Luce	£5/5/-
Mrs. General Rayne	£5
Mrs. Wilmot	£5
The Messrs. Blundell	£2
Miss Ann Harbin	£1
Miss Philips	£1
TA of Shaston	£1

Loans were **also made** available for this **purpose by:—**

Mary Poos of Preston	£290
Rueben Groves of "Broddway "	£210
Thomas Quirk	£500
Henry Marder	£1,300
William Drayton	£700

Thus by October 1815, the trustees had adequate funds and much encouragement to proceed with the work.

As early as July 7th, 1815, " The Dorchester & Sherborne Journal" had carried an invitation for architects and builders to tender for the building of the new church. Distinct tenders were required from bricklayers and stone masons, plasterers and slaters, carpenters and joiners, plumbers and glaziers, and painters and smiths. Plans of the proposed Church could be seen at the office of Mr. James Hamilton and further information could be obtained from Mr. J. Henning, both of Weymouth.

Perhaps the most notable event in the life of Melcombe Regis Parish was mentioned in " The Dorchester and Sherborne Journal" dated 28th July, 1815. The Rev. Mr. Gorton was requested to preach a sermon on the following Sunday, to open a general subscription for the relief of the widows and dependants of the brave men killed under the Command of the Illustrious Wellington. Mr. Gorton did this with great effect; he not only subscribed £5 towards the fund himself, but the collection taken in the old Parish Church of Melcombe Regis before its demolition amounted to £35 12s. Od. ! A goodly sum for those days.

CHAPTER II

THE PARISH CHURCH OF MELCOMBE REGIS — 1817

" The Dorchester & Sherborne Journal " of Friday, October 13th, 1815, records the laying of .the foundation stone of the New Church at Melcombe Regis as taking place on October 4th, 1815.

" We have frequently had occasion to point out the dilapidated and ruinous state in which the old church of this town lately stood; objections have been as often started by the opposers of the plan for re-building it, who maintained that this tottering fabric would stand the test of another century. But these erroneous opinions were of little avail, and the voice of truth and reason has triumphed over all opposition. The wise determination of a great majority of the inhabitants to erect a new church, has convinced the most prejudiced to the undertaking, by ocular demonstration, that the rotten and wholly decayed state of the old place of divine worship, must have exposed the congregation to constant and most imminent danger. No persons could offer up their devotions in it without a dread of its immediate fall.

" The day then was a proud one to be recorded in the annals of this ancient Borough, being appointed for laying the first stone of the intended New Church.

" On this important occasion, the Clergy, Recorder, Mayor &c., were assembled at 12 o'clock, and walked to the spot in the following

Order of Procession

" Two Churchwardens, with white wands, carrying corn, wine, and oil, in silver goblets. Band of the 49th Regiment playing " God save the King" followed by the Trustees appointed by Act of Parliament for carrying the work into effect.

Two Serjeants at Mace, preceding the Lord Bishop of Salisbury, and the Rev. Dr. Short, Chaplain and Sub Preceptor to the Princess Charlotte of Wales— James Bower Esq., Mayor—the Rev. Dr. England, Archdeacon of the County of Dorset—the Rev. Dr. Wyndham, Rector; Rev. Mr. Gorton, Curate ; and Drs. Dupre and Davis — the Lodges of All Souls and Armathea, Lodge of the 49th Regiment, No. 354, under the Constitution of Ireland, in full regalia. The Procession closed with the Friendly Society parading with colours flying and drums beating, altogether forming a grand spectacle.

" On arriving at the north-east corner of the intended New Church, the stone was lowered from its suspended situation. After it was adjusted by masonic implements, it was reported to the Bishop of Salisbury by Mr. Hamilton, the architect, that the corner stone was placed in due order, when his Lordship delivered the following appropriate prayer :—

' O Eternal God ! mighty in power and of Majesty incomprehensible, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, much less the walls of temples made with hands, and who yet has been graciously pleased to promise thy especial presence to thy faithful servants, who shall assemble in thy name to offer up their prayers and supplications unto Thee. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to be present with us who are here gathered together with all humility, and readiness of heart, to fix the foundation stone of a Temple to be erected to the honour of Thy great name, for reading thy Holy Word, — for celebrating thy holy sacraments, — for offering to thy glorious Majesty the sacrifices of prayer and thanksgiving, — for blessing thy people in thy name, — and for the performance of all other holy ordinances. Accept, O Lord this service at our hands, and bless it with success; grant that it may resemble that Rock upon which the founder of our Christian faith hath built his church; may it be the means of promoting thy true religion and virtue, and of keeping us in unity of spirit, and in the bond of peace: may it tend to thy glory, and the furtherance of our happiness (both spiritual and temporal), through Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour.'

" His Lordship afterwards gave it three blows with a

mallet, signifying his approval of the work. The ceremony being completed, the 65th Psalm was sung by the Choristers; after which the corn, wine and oil were strewed and poured on the stone by the Rector, the Rev. Dr. Wyndham. Coins of the present reign were then deposited in a cavity of the stone, in which was fixed a tablet bearing the following inscription:
'Oct. 4, 1815. This foundation stone was laid at the command of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales, by the Right Rev. John, Lord Bishop of Salisbury, in the 55th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King George the Third.

" The whole was conducted amidst a vast assemblage of nobility and gentry, with the utmost solemnity, and concluded with an Anthem, admirably sung by the Melcombe Choir. The procession returned in the same order to the Guildhall, where it separated, and adjourned till five o'clock, when the Right Rev. Prelate attended by the Clergy, Mayor, Trustees, Committee, and a large party of Gentlemen, partook of a most sumptuous dinner at Luce's Hotel, where the utmost loyalty and conviviality were combined; in the course of the evening several excellent glees, composed by Catcot, Harrington, and Darley, were introduced by Messrs. Read, Rolls, and Margrie, highly to the gratification of the assemblage ; and at ten o'clock the company departed, much pleased with the social enjoyment of this ever memorable day."

Eighteen months later in " The Dorchester and Sherborne Journal " dated March 24th, 1817, the consecration of the New Church of Melcombe Regis, to be called " St. Mary " took place on March 23rd, 1817.

" The long and ardent wishes of the inhabitants of this town were gratified last Sunday, by the opening of their new church with Divine Service. The inconvenience that has been experienced during the 18 months that the building has been in progress, has made them contemplate the auspicious day

when they were to meet again in a regular place of worship, with more than usual interest.

" In the morning, the Rev. William Gorton read the prayers, and a most impressive discourse was delivered by the Rev. Dr. England, the Archdeacon of Dorset, from the 8th verse of the 26th Psalm; " I have loved the habitation of Thy house;" and in the afternoon an excellent sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Wyndham, the Rector, from the 26th chapter of Leviticus and the "2d" verse.

" The 63rd, 122nd, 134th and 132nd Psalms were admirably set to music for the occasion by Mr. Vertue, and sung by the choir belonging to the church with a degree of propriety and taste that rendered this part of the service singularly attractive. The 63rd Psalm was particularly impressive and sublime." (Matthew Vertue's name appears in the list of seventy Trustees appointed for carrying out the work of erecting the Church).

" The organ which has been considerably enlarged by Mr. Bell, of London, was highly admired for its variety and sweetness. Indeed it is but justice to this excellent artist to say that his judicious alterations and improvements have made this a very superior instrument.

" The necessity there was of erecting a building sufficiently large to contain the increasing inhabitants and numerous visitors who frequent the place, has unavoidably exceeded the means of the congregation, but it is confidently hoped, that the benefactions of a generous public, will enable the Trustees to discharge the debt that has been incurred in the completion of this long-wished-for and desirable object."

Quoting from an old guide book " St. Mary's, Melcombe Regis has been briefly described as consisting of a nave, chancel, and two aisles extending the whole length of the church; it is galleried round, with another tier erected at the west end, as an inscription informs us, in 1821. The

galleries are supported by pillars of the Doric order. The church affords accommodation for about 2,000 persons, including 500 free sittings. The Corporation have two pews, one for the Mayor and Aldermen, the other for the Councillors, lined with blue cloth, and adorned with the arms of the borough—a ship gilt, supported by a lion and unicorn—situate at the upper end of the south side of the middle aisle.

" The interior of the church has few mural monuments; several were injured at the demolition of the old church, and have not been replaced. The aisles were covered with tombstones, marking the last resting place of mortality; these also have disappeared; and the few monuments that remain have nothing but the quaintness of their language to recommend them to notice. The church is surmounted by a cupola, supported by eight pillars, in which hangs the bell used for divine worship and funerals."

During September 1966 when re-slating of the Church was being carried out the names of masons employed on the work of building the Church were found inscribed in cement plaques in the tower. The name of Henry Raget, aged 23, Joseph Maunders, Richard Warren, aged 24, George Warren, aged 28, and James Parsons, aged 30, dated July 12th, 1816, were discovered, and the name of "J. Wood." There is a plaque showing the name of George Churchill, aged 25 " Waymouth " — " worke for Mr. Rodson," July 22nd, 1831, and one giving the name of George Score. Mr. Score must have been one of the men employed in repair work fourteen years after the opening of the Church.

Items of historic interest relating to the previous Church erected in 1605, and included in the 1817 building are Sir James Thornhill's famous picture entitled " The Last Supper" which was painted in 1721, and a relic of the old Church which was formerly one of the outside windows can

be seen near the pulpit. This was discovered during restoration work in 1922.

CHAPTER III

EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Rev. Thomas Wyndham, D.C.L.(Instd. 1809)

Rev. Charles Bridges, M.A. (Instd. 1849)

At the time of the completion of the building of the New Church of Melcombe Regis in 1817, Weymouth was set in a vastly different scene than it is today. It was in the days of the stage coach, and those first assembled in the new Church for worship would have

no doubt heard the coachman's horn as the loaded vehicle arrived on the Weymouth esplanade road and made its way to the Crown Inn in St. Thomas Street where it invariably arrived daily from London at 11-30 a.m. There would have been considerable excitement as the passengers alighted and the baggage was unloaded, and eager enquiries were made of the latest news from London. When darkness was falling the main streets of Melcombe Regis would be dimly lit with gas light, and this new innovation was gratefully accepted for the " modern " Parish Church. The postal service was in existence and it is surprising to be reminded that it cost 4d. in those days to despatch a letter as far as Dorchester ! However, few people indulged in this luxury apart from the well-to-do. In 1967, we today pay the highest letter rate ever yet levied, and consider 4d. to be plenty enough, even though our letters can reach any part of the United Kingdom.

Unfortunately the vestry minute book of the 1817 Church has not come to light, but a Register of Services is still in existence which should have commenced from the opening of the New Church in March 1817, but six years' records in this book are missing. We can only then start a written record in 1823. We find that from the very beginning of the life of the New Church the Rector (Dr. Wyndham), his curate-in-charge (Mr. Gorton), and other clerical helpers had a full programme of services. There were three full services each Sunday at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 6-30 p.m. with sermons of substantial length. The sacrament was celebrated after the afternoon service on the first Sunday in every month, and on Wednesdays and Fridays. Baptisms took place following the afternoon service and on Wednesdays and Fridays. Communicants recorded in 1842 were from 160-200 on the Festivals. There were some 150 baptisms each year, the population being shown as 6,000. Attendance at the morning service was usually about 1,400 people. The Sunday School work was flourishing, and although children left day school by the age of thirteen years, the clergy were able to retain them in Sunday School. When asked in 1842 whether the Church

was sufficiently large for the needs of the people who attended, the reply from the clergy was that further accommodation was needed.

The bulk of the pews were rented to private individuals, and in the south gallery there were 30 pew sittings charged to His Majesty King George III. for which the Royal Household paid £157-10-0 annually. Of the body of Trustees it was necessary for seven members to sign when any Church business was transacted, and they were usually, William Gorton, John Dupre, George Chamberlaine, James Horsford, George Ellis, James Bower and John Henning. This was required by the Act for taking down and re-building the Parish Church of Melcombe Regis dated June 7th, 1815.

In 1817 poverty was rife in Weymouth and Melcombe Regis and we find in " The Dorchester and Sherborne Journal" on April 22nd, that " On Thursday last a meeting of our principal inhabitants took place at the Guildhall, for the laudable purpose of raising a fund for purchasing bed and other linen for the use of the sick poor.

The Rev. William Gorton was in the chair, and a very liberal contribution was made by upwards of 100 subscribers."

Seating extensions were carried into effect as early as 1821 when second galleries were added to the west end. (Later called " flying galleries "). Amongst those who preached Sunday sermons in 1823 the names of the Rev. W. Brassey, Rev. Dr. Dupre, Rev. Mr. Shipley, Rev. H. Poole, Rev. James Rudge, D.D., Rev. W. Macdonald, Rev. Mr. Walker, Rev. Mr. Jackson and Rev. F. Oakley appeared. Dr. Wyndham (the Rector), was infrequently present at St. Mary's, as he was patron and Rector of two other livings in Dorset and Hampshire respectively. He left most of the responsibility of the ecclesiastical work to Mr. Gorton, his curate-in-charge at Weymouth. Dr. Wyndham is recorded as having preached on April 18th, 1824 (Easter Day), and during that year other names appeared in the Services Book such as the Rev. H. Bennett, Rev. Mr. Chamberlaine, Rev. T. Thomas, Rev. Mr. Bridges (later to become Rector), Rev. Mr.

Haviland, Rev. Dr. Gardner, Rev. Mr. Templer, Rev. I. Watts and the Rev. H. Bowles. On October 31st there was a special preacher, Dr. Goodall (Provost of Eton), and the name of the Rev. Mr. Addison is also recorded. There is no record of where services were held during the building of the New Church of 1817. We do know however that even while the New Church was in the course of erection, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials took place in Melcombe Regis Parish during the years 1815-1817. It is recorded in the registers that troops were stationed at Radipole Barracks. Some of the men (officers and other ranks), married girls who were resident in the Parish of Melcombe Regis. There were also a number of children brought for Baptism, and certain young children of military personnel were recorded in the Burial register. Men of the following Regiments appear frequently in the registers :— 14th Regt. Light Dragoons, 39th Regt. of Foot, 49th Regt. of Foot, 23rd Regt. of Light Dragoons, 23rd Regt. of Lancers, and 1st Regt. of Life Guards.

On November 23rd, 1824, an historic entry is found in the Burial Register in the handwriting of the Rev. Willoughby Brassey (Curate). " A dreadful storm in the morning between the hours of 5 and 9. Wind S.S.E. Two thirds of the Esplanade washed away— not a house on the front but what was damaged. The village of Chesil on the Island of Portland nearly destroyed; upwards of 30 persons buried in the ruins." Two men lost their lives in Weymouth on that occasion.

In 1825 other preachers officiated in the Parish Church, such as the Rev. W. Elliott, Rev. Mr. Oliver, Rev. Mr. Sealey, Rev. I. Horsford, Rev. H. Marriott and the Rev. E. C. Hoare. On September llth Archdeacon Fisher preached specially in order to raise funds for " The Dispensary ". On October 2nd Archdeacon Moysey preached. Dr. Wyndham was also Rector of Radipole, and in those days of horse transport he must have found it difficult to visit the various Parishes under his control. He did however preach again at St. Mary's on April 6th, 1828. On June 21st, 1829, there were no services as the Church was under repair. On August 3rd Dr. Wyndham

Melcoinbe Regis Parish Church (1817)

Rev. Willoughby Brassey
(Curate-in-charge, 1823-1845)

again preached, and on August 30th there was a visit from the Bishop of Bristol, and on September 13th when the sum of £47-8-2 was raised for the dispensary. St. Mary's was of course in the diocese of Bristol until 1836.

On July 15th, 1830, there was a memorial service following the death of George IV when Dr. England (Archdeacon) preached the sermon. On November 21st, 1830 we find a name to become familiar for many years in the signature of the Rev. E. Hollond who later became patron of the living. On August 21st, 1831, there was a collection for "The National School" of £30-10-$4^{1/2}$, and on September 9th. 1832, a collection for the Sunday School of£42-15-$10^{1/2}$. At that time further alterations and additions were carried out in the Parish Church.

Not many Weymouth people know of the Burial Ground situated at the end of Bury Street which belongs to the Parish of

Melcombe Regis. In that old burying place the grave of an Excise officers who came to an untimely end is located, and much of the original headstone can still be clearly deciphered. It reads " Sacred to the memory of Lieut. Thos. E. Knight, R.N., of Folkestone, Kent, aged 42, who in the execution of his duty as chief officer of the coastguard at Lulworth was wantonly attacked by a body of smugglers on the night of the 28th June 1832. By whom, after having been unmercifully beaten, he was thrown over the cliff near Durdledoor from the effects of which he died the following day." The last resting place of Edward Fooks (Parish Clerk) is also to be found there. He died on the 14th February 1851 and the then Rector (Rev. Charles Bridges) conducted the burial service.

A noteworthy entry appears for December 6th, 1832 when there was a Thanksgiving Day for having providentially escaped the Ravages of the Cholera, and also on April 14th, 1833. Cholera was a deadly infection of the intestines attributed to poor sanitation, and was usually fatal. On November 22nd, 1835, the Bishop of Bath and Wells preached on behalf of a fund for the relief of the Protestant Irish Church Clergy.

Dr. Wyndham came from a staunch Protestant family, and his successors at St. Mary's have always been men of firm

Reformation and Evangelical beliefs and practice.

Melcombe Regis Parish administered a Poor House situated in Lower St. Alban Street on the site of the present Drill Hall from 1822 until at least 1835, and the following are some of the decisions made at regular vestry meetings. April, 1823—"Resolved that the Committee highly approving of the conduct of Mr. Henry Clark the Governor, and as a mark of their approbation, award him one guinea for a new hat." (Presumably a top hat!). Note how Mr. Clark was told to spend the money ! Perhaps the overseers noticed that the one he was constantly wearing was very shabby! Feb. 2nd, 1824— " Lock's wife, whose husband has been taken smuggling—5/- per week till her husband's case is determined." May 2nd, 1825—"Edward
Alien solicits the Committee to pay his coach hire to London to obtain a place in the India House." May 5th, 1830—" Resolved that Messrs Hile, Scott, Scriven and Ayling be requested to attend the Town Hall on Tuesday next and endeavour to impress on the minds of the magistrates the necessity of not interfering with the proceedings of the Vestry." No doubt the gentlemen of the Vestry thought they were not receiving the customary respect from the Civil authorities, and employed a firm of solicitors to state their case ! June 2nd, 1830—"Resolved that tender for the supply of coffins for the poor house be accepted, the large size at ll/9d. and the small size at 6/-each." June 14th, 1832—" Resolved that George Evil's pay be stopped in consequence of his coming to the Vestry drunk." One can hardly be surprised at this refusal! May 7th, 1834—" Symes and Co., applied for some remuneration for taking up the body of John Palmer who was drowned in the Backwater. Resolved the sum of 15/- be allowed." July 2nd, 1834—" Resolved that the Church cleaners Mrs. Bealeard and Mrs. Burridge be allowed 2/6d. per week each after the 8th instant." March 25th, 1835—"Proposed by Mr. J. Rolls that the Governor's salary be increased to forty pounds per annum. Seconded by Mr. G. Rolls and carried most unanimously." July 2nd, 1835—" John Eliot applies for assistance to enable him to go to Bridport to get medical advice

for his arm which is decaying. To have 10/- allowed."

Dr. Wyndham preached on January 1st, 1837, and on frequent occasions during the following weeks. There were no services on the Sundays May 20th and 27th, 1838, as the Church was again under repair. On January 1st, 1840, Weymouth Corporation paid 5/- for cleaning the Corporation Pew. and in December 1842 the Verger was instructed by the Church Wardens not to admit any persons into the Corporation Pew with the exception of visitors and members of the Council. On May 29th, 1843 there was again no service because repairs were being carried out

On November 5th, 1845, the death was recorded of the Rev. W. Brassey, Curate-in-charge for 22 years. March 20th, 1847, was the occasion of the visit of the Bishop of Salisbury when a Confirmation service was held. There were 170 female candidates and 72 males. On July 20th, 1856. a collection was taken for " the better ventilation of the Church " which amounted to £27-16-8. It seems that was a particularly hot summer I

During this period an outstanding benefaction to the Parish Church was made and is described as follows :— " The Altar Piece of this Church was embellished in Purple, White and Gold, the Commandments in Illuminated Letters. The Communion Table, Reading Desk and Pulpit in Purple Velvet. The carpets to communion table and Pulpit in Purple, and the Organ re-painted and Motto placed over it, as over the Ceiling above the Communion, by Sir John Hesketh Lethbridge, Bart. (A.D. 1854). In remembrance of his maternal ancestor, the Rt. Hon. Sir Walter Buckler, Lord Privy and Councillor to Queen Elizabeth, born at Causeway in this Parish, who gave for this purpose £130."

Charles Bridges who became Rector of St. Mary's in 1849 was a man of great devoutness of life and has written valuable theological works. " The Christian Ministry with an enquiry into the causes of its inefficiency " was one of his outstanding writings. Charles Bridges was trained for the ministry at Queen's College, Cambridge, and ordained in 1817. He became vicar of Old Newton, Suffolk, from 1823-1849, and later of Melcombe Regis and Hinton Martell, Dorset. He was renowned for his pulpit ministry and books, some of which were scriptural studies. His " Christian Ministry" went through nine editions within 20 years of its appearance in 1829 and has probably remained unequalled in its field. C. H. Spurgeon said, " all Bridges writings were very suggestive to Ministers." A foreword to a small selection of his correspondence published in book form in 1870 reveals a man of deep Christian piety. "I never remember anyone in whose presence it was more difficult to be irreligious or even frivolous." It was reprinted in 1958. In recent years " Christian Ministry " was reviewed by a writer in a Christian weekly who described it as a book " on how to preach " He recommended it as a suitable book to give to your minister for Christmas ! !

CHAPTER IV

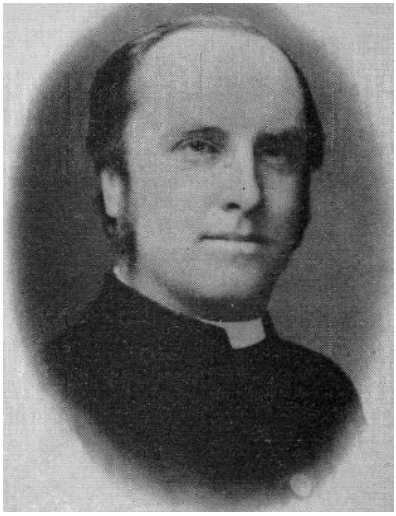
TO THE TURN OF THE CENTURY (PART I)

Rev. Talbot A. L. Greaves, M.A.	(Instd. 1856)
Rev. John Hubert Scott, M.A.	(Instd. 1881)
Rev. John Lovell Gwatkin Hadow, M.A.	(Instd. 1889)

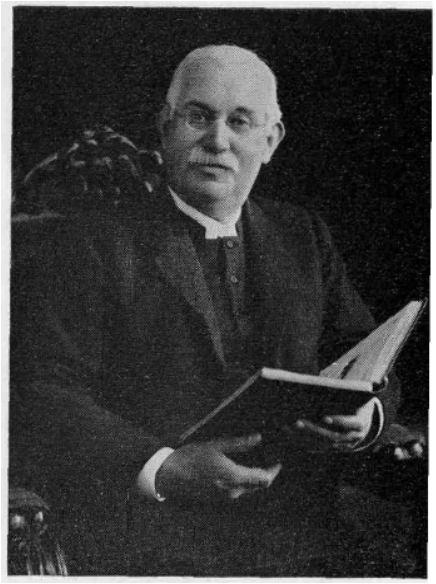
When the Rev. Talbot Greaves commenced his ministry at St. Mary's perhaps the first matter of historic importance was the official closure of the burial ground around the Church. The bodies of parishioners of Melcombe Regis had been laid to rest in the Church grounds since 1606 and without doubt many of the remains are still well below the present building. Another outstanding occasion was the Commemoration service held on November 14th, 1858 to mark the 300th Anniversary of the accession to the Throne of England of that great Protestant Queen, Elizabeth 1. Also on September 1st, 1859 there was the opening of the re-built organ. The work had been carried out by Mr. Walker, a former partner of the well-known firm of organ builders in this country today.

These were the days of the Church Rate when every property owner in the Parish was rated annually for the upkeep of the Church. The Church Rate in 1859/60 was assessed as £192-11-0. The proportion of payment was at the rate of $2^{1/2}$ d. in the pound on the rateable value of the property in this Parish, to defray the repairs and expenses of the Church. The actual figure to be recovered by the Church authorities in this way was £223-15-11.

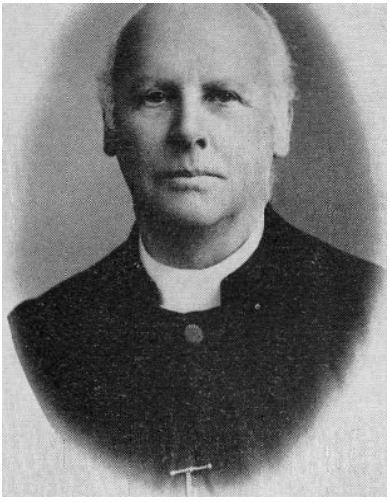
Rev. A. L. Talbot Greaves, M.A. (Inst. 1856)



Rev. John Hubert Scott, M.A. (Instd. 1881)



Rev. John Lovell Gwatkin Hadow, M.A. (Instd. 1889)



Rev. Charles Askwith, M.A. (Instd. 1903)

In 1860 there is a record of 2 Chalices and 1 Paten being disposed of, being a portion of the old communion plate for £9-12-1 to *Mr.* James Senior, Silversmith, and was broken up by him in the Churchwarden's presence. This money was put towards the purchase >f 3 new Chalices and 1 Paten. It is interesting to note from the •register of Parish rate payers that there was in those days a Brewery n St. Thomas Street and a Fish Market in Maiden Street.

On May 22nd, 1860, the Church was closed for whitewashing and cleaning. It seems that some of the worshippers who sat anywhere near the walls would probably leave for home with patches of white on their coats. Regarding the organ this was insured against fire in 1860 for £500. The 1967 instrument is now valued at well over £6,000 ! The organist received a salary of £32. There were six vergers employed: one of whom was a " T. Scriven." In this year also: here was a meeting in the Town Hall regarding the proposed enlargement and repairing of the Parish Church, and there is a later note in the accounts of " whitewashing etc., £20." Actually in 1861 the Church was re-pewed and the interior improved.

1862 brought considerable distress in the country and we find that on July 27th a collection was taken in the Parish Church for the " Lancashire Relief Fund " which amounted to £200. This was caused by the failure of the cotton crop in the southern states of America which meant there was no work for cotton operatives in Lancashire to do. During that year regular lectures were held weekly for " Working Chaps " which continued for quite a long time but they were later called " Working Class " lectures. Also in 1862 a Mr. Smart was asked to restore Sir James Thornhill's picture for the sum of £23. It cost £100 to do this in 1953 !

There is an amusing entry in the services book on January llth, 1863, " Returned to Mrs. Burt, having put £ sovereign in the plate by mistake—9/-." Poor Mrs. Burt perhaps had bad eyesight and could not afford as much as 10/- at one attendance at Church ! Also in 1863 regarding pew-sittings, non-residents were

rateable, and defaulters were summoned before Justices. This hardly ties up with Christian charity ! Some, however, were excused on the ground of poverty.

In 1864 a return was sent to the Bishop of the diocese stating that the population was 6,500. The Parish had three curates and there were no endowments. There were also two houses—one at Melcombe Regis and one at Radipole. When asked if the Church could retain Sunday School children when they reached school leaving age usually at thirteen, it was said that night schools were in existence in the Parish and the " teenagers " readily attended these. Dissenting congregations in the Parish were given as, Independents, Wesleyan and Baptists.

1865 reveals some more interesting expenses. Coke for stoves cost £1-17-3. It cost nearly £200 for the heating season 1964-65 to purchase solid fuel to heat the Church building! Repairs to the roof

and tower etc., cost £24. The Lodge keeper at the Burial Ground at Melcombe Regis Cemetery was in that year given an increase in wages of 3/-. He had formerly received 15/- per week. The Church Rates were substantially increased on the opening of the Great Western Railway and the Church authorities were entitled to receive the sum of £7-7-11 in addition to the other properties. The Parish Clerk must have had quite a task to collect the Rates from the large Parish as it was then. However, in that year the compulsory Church Rates were abolished, and the minutes record the regular introduction of an offertory for Church expenses.

On June 19th, 1868 by order of Queen Victoria there was *a* thanksgiving service for the preservation of H.R.H. Duke of Edinburgh from the attack of an assassin in Australia, and for the success to H.M. Forces in the Abyssinian Expedition for the rescue of certain captives imprisoned in that country. In that year there was a Mr. Rook (organist) who resigned the Office and a Mr. Damen was appointed.

February 9th, 1871 showed further generosity of St.

Mary's congregation when £42-10-0 was collected for the relief of the starving population of Paris.

In 1874 Mr. Talbot Greaves had the honour of seeing his work extended by the opening of a daughter Church (Christchurch) which was situated in King Street. Much good spiritual work was accomplished by many dedicated curates in that building throughout the years, and it was a matter of great sorrow when the church was closed for public worship in 1939.

1876 saw the advent of a series of temperance meetings in the Parish and the first one is recorded on August 7th. During that summer the weather was very unseasonable and prayers for fair weather were specially offered up to God on August 4th. Also in that year there was a special week of services to mark the 25th year of the Rector's ministry. On October 28th, 1880 there is a notice of an annual meeting of the London City Mission, a Society which is still well-supported at St. Mary's in 1967. It was a sad day for St. Mary's when it was announced that the Rev. Talbot Greaves had accepted the living of Clifton Church on September llth, 1881, and he did in fact leave the Parish of Melcombe Regis on the 30th day of that month. During Mr. Greaves' lengthy ministry in our Parish he won the esteem and affection of a very large circle of friends, and was universally respected throughout the town. He was an orator and preacher of no mean order; the crowded congregations who listened to his sermons bore testimony to his eloquence and worth. He was a man of very strong convictions, and deeply conscientious; he was well-known for his decided Protestantism, in fact he was a staunch champion of the cause. During his Rectorship he saw the foundation of the Weymouth College, and the Weymouth Middle School, also the restoration of Radipole Church. Whilst at Clifton for 10 years he was instrumental in building a new Church.

On December 18th, 1881, the Rev. J. H. Scott arrived

as the new Rector and he too proved to be a man of exceptional spiritual qualities and powers of leadership. Prayers for deliverance of H.M. the Queen from recent danger were offered in the Parish Church on March 4th, 1882. Loyalty to the Queen in those days was most pronounced and it is well-known that Her Majesty did everything possible to encourage the furtherance of the ministry of the Christian Church. On July 30th, 1882, there was a service in aid of the Dispensary which was situated in School Street. This was founded in 1871 and was regularly supported by the Parish Church.

In 1882 a great spiritual revival broke out in Weymouth when Mr. W. H. Aitken, an evangelist, visited the town. The Borough population was then given as 14,000. Attendances at the Mission services were 51,461, and on the final thanksgiving day there was an attendance of 2,500. One practical result of the campaign was the decision to build a Mission Hall in West Street which was situated in the poorest part of the Parish.

We find in 1882 that the Church was opened every day from 12 to 2 p.m. and one important addition in that year was the erection of the fine oak pulpit which was subscribed for mainly by the following: Rev. J. Hubert Scott, Messrs. J, G. Rowe and S. S. Milledge (Churchwardens), and Messrs. W. Eliot, T. Luce, J. A. Talbot, J. Robertson, G. R. Crickmay, J. Moorhead, W. Smith and J. Lundie. From August 9th to the llth inclusive, a Bazaar was held to raise money for the restoration of the Church. Also in that year there is a note on September 13th that " At 4 a.m. War in Egypt. Battle of Tel-el-Kebir, victory of British-Arabi Pact. Arabi fled to Cairo where he was taken prisoner," and on September 24th there was a service of Thanksgiving for peace.

On November 5th new hymn books were first used, and on the 14th there was a large service of Confirmation.

There were 36 local candidates and 278 from H.M.S. " Boscawen." On November 24th a letter was directed to the congregation by the Churchwardens stating that the Church cleaner had retired, her wages having been 6/- per week, and it was decided to give her a pension of 5/- per week for the rest of her natural life."

A further letter was sent out to the members of the congregation by the Churchwardens on November 24th, 1882 stating, "We have dispensed with the hitherto willingly rendered services of the five Sextons, paying them up to Easter next. It is hoped that the regular members of the congregation will feel no inconvenience in opening the pew doors themselves."

In 1883 a lecture is advertised on " Early Religious History of Weymouth" by Mr. W. B. Barrett, who subsequently gave other lectures on this subject in Weymouth.

March 4th to 19th saw the return of the Rev. W. H. Aitken together with another evangelist (Rev. James Stephens), when special notices were circulated. " Rich and poor alike were invited—never mind the plainest and poorest dress." On April 10th special services were commenced for domestic servants and employers were asked to enable them to attend.

The Royal Imperial Yeomanry attended a special service on May 13th and they were frequently to be seen on parade at St. Mary's afterwards. The foundation stone of the Mission Hall was actually laid on October 24th, 1883. It is also of particular interest to read that the Children's Special Service Mission held a beach mission in Weymouth. Children's open-air Mission work has continued regularly (apart from 1939-45 war years) at Weymouth, up to the time of the publication of this book. An amusing entry in the accounts concerning a Sale of Work that year was " Band—25/- ": " Crier—2/-". Apparently during that year there were special meetings for " Women only." Miss Ellice

Hopkins was billed to address a meeting of " Educated " Women at the Working Men's Club on Friday, June 26th at 3-30 p.m. Subject:— " Grave Moral Questions "—"Mothers are requested not to bring their daughters "- At St. Mary's Mission Room on the Saturday there was a lecture for Christian workers. Subject:— " The Care of our Girls."

Intemperance was a real vice in 1886, and we find a statement dated February 26th as follows :— I, William Rabbitts do hereby voluntarily declare that I will from henceforth abstain from all intoxicating liquors." Witness—J. H. Scott. The Parish Clerk's salary was also increased to £35 per annum. He had been paid £20 as fixed thirty years previously!

June 21st, 1887 saw the great Thanksgiving service for Her Majesty's completion of 50 years of Her reign, and on November 6th a relief fund was raised in the town for the widows and orphans connected with the late yacht accident, to which fund St. Mary's liberally contributed.

On the death of the Emperor of Germany (the Queen's son-in-law) on June 15th, 1888, St. Mary's bell was muffled and tolled from 12 noon to 1 p.m. each day until the day of the burial. November 19th of that year St. Mary's heard of the forthcoming departure of another well-beloved Rector when the Rev. J. H. Scott accepted charge of the Parish of Spitalfields in East London.

CHAPTER V

To the Turn of the Century (Part II)

Rev. Talbot A. L. Greaves, M.A. (Instd. 1856)
Rev. John Hubert Scott, M.A. (Instd. 1881)
Rev. John Lovell Gwatkin Hadow, M.A. (Instd. 1889)

The Rev. J. L. G. Hadow was instituted as the new Rector on March 10th, 1889, and an outstanding and capable pastor and controller of Parish affairs he proved to be. It was decided in April of that year that the Churchyard needed regular care and Mr. Mills, Nurseryman, was asked to keep it in decent order. On October 6th and 7th there was a short Parochial Mission which indicates how concerned Mr. Hadow was about the spiritual life of the Church.

Temperance still held a prominent place in the life of the Parish and on January 26th, 1890 there was a Temperance Mission held at the Jubilee Hall in St. Thomas Street which was opened by the Bishop of Salisbury.

Mr. Hadow introduced a quite new innovation in the commencement of a Parish magazine which in those days cost Id. per month per copy. We find that a Temperance meeting was held monthly in the Parish on Wednesdays. By the close of the year it was possible to have the year's monthly issues of the magazine bound for the sum of I/-. At that time we read of the first mention of an Assistant Clergy Fund. In opening the first issue of the magazine in January 1890 the Rector stated, " The influenza has made its appearance in Weymouth and has affected hundreds and thousands of all ranks and ages. Its victims have suffered severe pains in the head and back followed by intense weakness." The introduction, too, of popular Saturday evenings at the Jubilee Hall for working men is also mentioned. They were often referred to as " Saturday Pops " The " Pops " of 1967 are not so original after all! At that time we read that a Mr. Robinson was organist at St. Mary's, and that the sum of £222 was raised to support a curate at St. Mary's and at Radipole. Curates' Stipends unless provided for in this way were the personal responsibility of the Rector. Sunday School Treats were also a great occasion in those days as we read that at the invitation of the Mayor and Mayoress (Mr. and Mrs. Dennis), all Sunday Schools in the town numbering some 3,000 children were entertained at " South cliff " on Wednesday the 20th August.

An interesting flashback to 1792 was mentioned in the magazine taken from the London Chronicle dated from Saturday, September 8th to Tuesday, September llth, and could be seen on application to the Rector.

" Weymouth September 9th." " This morning his Majesty bathed, as did the Prince of Wales, after which they walked on the Esplanade, accompanied by Lords Chesterfield and Paulet, Captains Hood, Burrard, and Grindle.

" At nine, his Majesty, with the Prince of Wales, and Duke and Duchess of York, went to Gloucester Lodge to breakfast.

" At half-past ten, the King, accompanied by the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, walked to Melcomb Church. The Queen, six Princesses and Duchess of York, went in their coaches, where they heard Divine service by the Rev. Mr. Cox ; after which his Majesty, the Prince, and the Duke of York, walked on the Esplanade.

" On Sunday 2nd inst : when their Majesties attended divine service at Weymouth, the sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Watkins, from 1 John iii, 11. " For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."

October 16th saw the formation of St. Mary's Young Men's Society which was open to boys of 16 and over and the magazine then had a circulation of 500 copies each month.

There was a pertinent entry in the services book for July 15th, 1891 (St. Swithin's Day), when mention was made that it was "very fine." There was still no endowment on the Parish Church which meant that the Churchwardens had to raise entirely all necessary funds.

Also in 1891 something quite new started in the Parish in the opening up of " Soup Kitchens " on Tuesdays and Fridays. Soup could be obtained at 1/2d. per pint. In that year the death occurred of Mr. John Lee, of King Street; who would have been 97 years had he lived until the 2nd of June. He was the last surviving Freeman of the Borough. These Freemen were Burgesses, whose rights were reserved on the passing of the Municipal Corporation Act in 1835. The original Freemen's Roll has long been a thing of the past in this Borough, although today we have " Honorary Freemen " elected to mark distinguished service to the community. Mr. Lee was also an attendant at the old Parish Church, which stood on the present site of St. Mary's and which had been taken down about 75 years previously; he was probably the last person who had a vivid recollection of its appearance. The deceased could call to mind several events in connection with the visits of George III to Weymouth, and remembered the Jubilee year of that Monarch.

Great interest was taken in the welfare of St. Mary's Day Schools where the standard of efficiency was as high as it is in 1967. It is recorded that the inspector asked some children if

they knew what was the meaning of the word " scandal." One little girl stepped vigorously forward, and throwing up her hand in that intelligent manner by which children indicate the possession of knowledge, attracted the notice of the inspector. Well, my child, he said, and what is the meaning? " Nobody does nothing, and everybody goes on talking about it everywhere," she answered.

On January 14th, 1892, there is a note of the death of Prince Albert Victor (Duke of Clarence and Avondale), son of the Prince and Princess of Wales. His death was even mentioned as being caused by inflammation of the lungs !

February I3th to 17th saw a series of meetings for the Evangelization of the Heathen and Mohammedan World. There was already a great concern for the necessity of spreading the Gospel to all parts of the world. The population of the Parish in that year was given as 5,196 and there were 1,092 houses.

May 15th saw a large parade at the Parish Church of Yeomanry, Artillery and Volunteers, and because of this, most of the pew holders willingly gave up their seats. Not so Miss Proby and Mr. Gregory, and the Rector was so displeased because of this that he recorded it in the services register. We can imagine how conspicuous the two pew holders looked surrounded by uniformed men !

The minutes of the vestry at that period were much concerned with burial grounds and we find that an additional labourer was engaged and he was to be paid 16/- per week.

November llth was the occasion of a "Kettledrum and Sale of Work " towards Church expenses. Sales of Work are no new thing in Parish life. There was in fact a Needlework Guild commenced in 1892.

A new hymn book " The Hymnal Companion " was introduced on Easter Sunday, 1892, which continued to be used for some 48 years at St. Mary's. Church Army Captains were constantly serving under the Rector and were often in charge of the services and meetings held at the Mission Hall, and it is of

interest to find that Mr. T. Brinsley heard the call to this work and entered training for the Church Army in that year. There was also a regular Bible Class " for servants " every Sunday at St. Mary's Schools led by Miss Drew whose influence was of tremendous value in the Parish life.

In 1893, on May 31st there was the Archdeacon's Visitation at the Jubilee Hall, and on June 22nd a great disaster was reported by the Rector, H.M. Ship ' Victoria' sunk off Tripoli through ramming by H.M. Ship ' Camperdown ' — 326 men and 22 officers drowned." Christmas decorations for the Church must have been elaborate at that time as we find from the accounts that the sum of £6-12-7 was spent for this purpose.

There was what was known as a " Middle Class Sunday School" started in 1894, and from the Rector's report on the work of the Church there seems to be some kind of slackening off in attendances. He wrote, " Those who formerly came to Church twice on Sunday, now only come once, and for a large number the novel or the newspaper have far greater attractions than the worship of Almighty God."

The well-known clock at St. Mary's was erected by public subscription during this year at the cost of £130.

In 1895 we find much detail of the affairs of St. Mary's Schools and amongst the prize winners we read the names of "Emily Swindles," " Willie King," and " Bertie Biles." Mr. Bert Biles proved to be one of the great stalwarts of St. Mary's, fulfilling a variety of offices in later years, including that of Churchwarden. He also became Mayor of the Borough of Weymouth, a Justice of the Peace, and a Manager of the Church Schools. His services to the Church and town have been most noteworthy.

In 1896 the Rev. E. Tanner (affectionately known as " Bob Tanner ") moved to a Parish in Leeds. He was a most active curate and was noted for his temperance work. St. Mary's Church expenses in 1896 were nearly £5 per week. In 1966 they are in the region of £60 !

February 9th, 1897, the burial of the late Sir Henry Edwards took place and there was a memorial service at the Church. Sir Henry had been a Member of Parliament for Weymouth, and a most generous benefactor, and had probably done more for the town of Weymouth than any other man, particularly in his consideration for the poor. There were great celebrations on June 20th on the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. We find also that another grave digger was appointed for the Burial Ground to be paid 21/- per week. A pension of 4/- per week was given by the Board to Mr. William Squibb the retiring gravedigger who had given 32 years of service.

1898 was a disastrous year for many people in Weymouth owing to the failure of Messrs Eliot's Bank. Over £50 was lost to St. Mary's Church Expenses fund. This amount however was recovered by means of a party of workers with collecting cards. There was need for further money to be spent on the Church for repairs. £250 was required for the Church and £150 for the organ. The Church was closed for a month for cleaning, painting and redecorating and was re-opened on Sunday November 6th. Two stained glass windows had been placed in the east end by the generosity of Miss Drew and Mr. John Vincent. They were in fact the first windows of this kind to be put in the Church. The lighting appeared to be not as good as it might have been, as the Rector stated that " it used to be a reproach to St. Mary's that it was one of the worst lighted Churches in the town." Because of this, "Argand" burners (flat-flame) were installed above and below the galleries. At the re-opening the Town Clerk read the first lesson, and the Assistant Clerk the second, and we find that the organ " under Mr. Hurdle's skilful manipulation discoursed grand strains." The organ restoration at that time was undertaken by a Weymouth firm (Messrs. W. Rogers & Sons) whose business address had been in St. Thomas Street.

News reached St. Mary's Rector of the untimely death of a former Rector (the late Talbot Greaves) who died at Stoke, Bristol, following injuries sustained from a fall from his horse.

Overseas Missionary work was still to the fore as on April 17th 1899, the Church Missionary Society Centenary was held, and there was a public meeting at the Jubilee Hall. It is noted that the number of coins collected was 1,308. The minutes record the resignation of Mr. R. Crumbleholme who had been verger for 21 years, and his services had been of the most satisfactory nature.

In 1899 also, St. Mary's Choir boys started a football team. Their colours were red and green as proclaimed by their caps and stocking tops. Mr. J. A. Staple was secretary, and the team played Holy Trinity and St. Paul's Choir boys and other local boys' teams.

The continuation of the Boer War in South Africa had now become a concern of great magnitude to the nation and in 1900 there was a service of intercession for our Forces serving there held every Wednesday at the Parish Church at 3 p.m.

February 2nd, 1901, was a sad day for the country when the burial of her Majesty Queen Victoria took place. Her reign resulted in great respect for the British Throne at home and overseas, as she was greatly loved by her people. On that day there was a Memorial service at the Church. Coats of Arms of the ten Prime Ministers of the Victorian era worked on banners were at that time suspended from the galleries of the Church.

There is quite a mundane entry in the services register for April 4th, 1901—" bolt in bell broken." The bell was at all times familiar in the Parish, and it is a matter of regret that owing to the erosion of the slender stone pillars supporting the cupola it is considered dangerous to use it any more.

On June 25th, 1901, there was a Thanksgiving service on the return of the 26th Dorset Company of the Imperial Yeomanry from South Africa. The men of the Yeomanry are said to have been the first volunteer soldiers to have fought overseas.

In that year there was an overdraft of £81-5-5 concerning St. Mary's Church Funds, and it was resolved that an appeal be made by the Churchwardens to those parishioners and owners of

property in the Parish who do not attend Melcombe Regis Parochial Church. It was pointed out that those who do attend cannot undertake the whole responsibility of the expense connected with the service of such Church. It urged those not attending to " render pecuniary assistance."

1901 saw the first occupation of the Melcombe Regis Rectory House at 3, Belvidere, by Mr. Hadow.

The Rev. J. L. G. Hadow still all for temperance, wrote in the April issue of the 1902 magazine that 40 or 50,000 soldiers have become teetotalers within the last 10 or 20 years in an Army of 270,000 men which Lord Roberts had said was practically without crime owing to the temperance movement. In South Africa they had heard of the most marvellous marches ever undertaken by the British Army.

In 1902 peace was restored in South Africa, and in June of that year there were great services of Thanksgiving held all over the country and very much so at St. Mary's Church.

Another memorable chapter ended in 1902 when Mr. Hadow accepted the living of Sutton Vallence with East Sutton, near Maid-stone. He had spent thirteen-and-a-half years as Rector of Melcombe Regis Parish. Both he and Mrs. Hadow and their family threw themselves readily into the work of the Parish, and his call to new work was naturally greatly regretted by his many friends in Weymouth. We have been privileged in recent years to have met at Weymouth regularly each summer three of his surviving daughters, one of whom. Miss Ethel Hadow, had been a missionary in Pakistan for 43 years.

In 1903 whilst the benefice was vacant one of the Trustees of the Simeon Trust visited Wevmouth to discuss the future of the Parish with the Churchwardens, and it was decided that the future income for the Parish would be raised by the sum of £300.

CHAPTER VI

(Instd. 1903) (Instd. 1910)

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY PARTI

Rev. Charles Askwith, M.A.

Rev. Thomas Lancaster, M.A.

Charles Askwith was inducted as Rector of St. Mary's on June 18th, 1903. He was a worthy successor to the recently resigned Rector, and upon his arrival it was obvious that he was a man of wide missionary vision. One of the first statements he made was that he hoped that more would be done for missionary work overseas. " Every minute of the twenty-lour hour day three people died without the knowledge of a Saviour's love." On August 30th of Chat year a Chalice and Paten were presented to the Rector by Miss Johns for the use of the Church.

On November 13th, 1904, the Rev. A. Mussen preached his first sermon at St. Mary's. Mr. Mussen had become assistant curate and fifty years later he retired to Weymouth, and frequently helped by preaching at St. Mary's and other churches in the town.

There was a tremendous expansion of Home and Foreign Missionary giving by 1904 and our contributions were increased from £273-17-0 to £540-1-10. This was partly due to the Centenary of the British and Foreign Bible Society to which the Parish contributed £102-17-4. St. Mary's became a well-attended Church and was filled Sunday by Sunday. Each Wednesday evening there was a Bible study which averaged an attendance o(150 to 200. The Sunday School also increased its membership by 100 in twelve months. There was a Men's service on the second Sunday of each month, and the average attendance was 200. Mr. Askwith at that time had the assistance of four colleagues which included the ministry at Radipole and Christ Church.

In 1908 essential organ repair work was carried out at a cost of £53 by Mr. R. A. Rogers of Weymouth. Unfortunately

Mr. Askwith did not enjoy particularly good health during his incumbency at Weymouth. He without doubt found the strain of the large pastoral oversight a tremendous task, and because of this he very regrettably asked the Trustees to accept his resignation for less arduous work in another part of the country.

On May 20th, 1910, a memorial service was held during the funeral of the late King Edward VII.

A new and distinguished chapter commenced upon the induction of the Rev. Thomas Lancaster on June 7th, 1910. The writer's first impression as a school boy, of this staunch Protestant figure, was one of a white-bearded, erect clergyman, usually seen riding a bicycle. He was a pleasant personality and carried a perpetual smile as he greeted his many friends and acquaintances in the streets of Weymouth. He, too, was another man with a deep concern for spreading the Gospel overseas. He was a great advocate of the Reformation principles and frequently preached " Protestant " sermons. He often used expressions which became characteristic of his ministry, such as reminding his congregations that eighty per cent of our people were outside all organised religion. He would commence his sermons with the words " My beloved." He was conscious of the drift at that time away from the Christian church, a matter ever uppermost in his mind and one which was frequently emphasised in his lengthy and well-prepared sermons.

Following the loss of the "Titanic" in 1912 special gifts were made at St. Mary's on April 28th in a national effort to bring help to distressed families whose relatives had perished at sea

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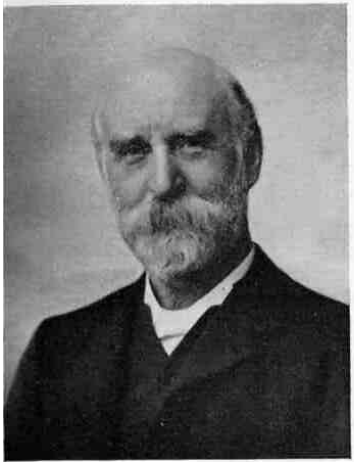
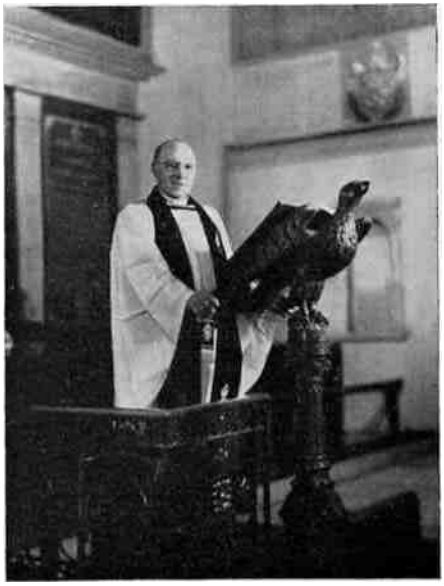




Mr. Lancaster continued to urge missionary giving, and he stated that it has always been proved that those Parishes which think most of the heathen are most blessed, and it is a fact that we do well to remember that God is no man's debtor. The professing Christian who has not faced the responsibility of giving is in a radically low spiritual state.

During 1912 the wages of gravediggers increased by I/- per week. There were three employed at Melcombe Regis Cemetery receiving 21/-, 20/- and 20/-; they had been paid at that rate since 1905. Their increases were as a result of applications because of the increased cost of living.

It is interesting to note that the Diocesan Quota in 1913 was £60 whilst in 1966 the figure exceeded £540.

It was sad news for the congregation of St. Mary's to hear of the loss at sea of John and Clara Vincent who were prominent workers at the Church. They were on the ill-fated " Empress of Ireland " which foundered in the St. Lawrence River on May 29th, 1914. Later the first electric light was installed in the Church as a memorial to these two greatly loved and respected members of the Church.

The outbreak of the Great War in August, 1914, heralded a time of increasing sadness for many Weymouth families, and immediately from the outbreak daily intercession services were held at 12 noon at the Church.

On January 10th, 1915, there was a Confirmation service specially for soldiers. There were also further adjustments to Cemetery staff's wages. The Lodge-keeper's wages from 25/- to 27/6d., and an assistant gravedigger received an increase from 21/- *to* 22/-; in addition there was a War bonus of 2/-.

Also in January united prayer meetings commenced at the Queen's Hall by the Evangelical Alliance. There was a Girls' Club started on Tuesdays, and a series of First Aid lectures given by Dr. Pritzler Wetherall. The Church of England Temperance Society work continued and 60 men of

the Northampton and Wilts Regiment attended a meeting. A faithful and honoured Churchwarden retired that year in the person of Mr. T. H. Williams after having given 26 years' service to the Parish Church.

On June 13th, 1916, there was a memorial service to the late Lord Kitchener, and on August 4th a collection was taken for Dorset Prisoners of War in Kut which amounted to £3-16-4. On October 2Cth the Centenary service of the Royal Hospital was held, the preacher being the Right Rev. Bishop Wallis. The collection came to £63-4-6. The Rev. T. Lancaster at that time urged all Church members to save to support the War effort.

March 30th, 1917, marked the Centenary of St. Mary's Church, but because of the War little could be done in the way of celebrations. There was a large congregation at the special service representative of all classes of the community. There was also a large number of robed clergy present. The sermon was preached by the Bishop of Salisbury who referred in an earnest manner to the many blessings wrought by God's Church in this Parish during the past 100 years.

"The preacher referred to the proposal for beautifying and improving the Church which, he was sure, would be brought about in due course, when the heavy War cloud which was at present overshadowing the land cleared away.

The Services Register records the name on October 28th of the Rev. E. Langston who preached on " Signs of the Times " representing the Jews' Society when an amount of £7-2-9 was collected for this work. Mr. Langston was later to become a prominent Rector of St. Mary's during the period of the outbreak of the second world war in 1939. The Rector who had been much concerned with the falling off in Church attendance, no doubt as a result of the frustrations of the 1914 war, made frequent reference to this in his letters and sermons.

Great relief was felt throughout the country following the signing of the Armistice with Germany on November llth, 1918, and a large parade service of Thanksgiving was held at St. Mary's on November 17th attended by the 5th Dorsets and the Dorset Medical Corps. Amongst those who received awards for distinguished conduct during the war was Lieut. Leslie Holland of the Artists' Rifles who gained the Military Cross. War savings continued to be collected each Monday at the Mission Hall from 4-5 p.m.

The end of the war enabled St. Mary's Church officers to give closer attention to parochial needs. We find that there was a two-day Sale of Work held which realised £218-13-8. The Rector reminded the congregation that £800 a year was needed to keep the three churches going. He was also concerned with the vast increase in the consumption of alcoholic liquor in Great Britain which he proved by statistics was " the most drunken country in the world."

Owing to the increase in costs it was decided that the Parish Magazine must now be raised to $1^{1/2}$d. per copy, and it was of interest to the people of St. Mary's that one of its members, Miss Alice Holland, left to take up work with the Young Women's Christian Association in France. There is a record too of an outstanding Sunday School outing to Westham of the scholars of St. Mary's and Christ Church Sunday Schools. The procession was led by the Salvation Army Band and returned to the King's Statue. At the close of 1918 there was a severe epidemic of influenza in Weymouth which necessitated the closing of several schools.

April 23rd, 1919, saw the last of the war-time intercession services at St. Mary's, and on October 22nd the Centenary of the Weymouth Auxiliary of the Church Missionary Society was celebrated. Open air meetings were a prominent feature of Parish life, and meetings were held every Thursday at such places as Burdon's Buildings,

Templeman's Court, East Street, Maiden Street, West Street etc. There was a great keenness for this type of evangelistic work, as there still is, though the meetings are now always held on the Esplanade or on the sands.

The Rector pointed out that the Spiritual Aid Fund for stipends needed over £800 annually and was the Parish's only source of income. The Rector's annual income from all sources was £301-2-7, from which there was £63-16-6 in essential outgoings, which left him with the net sum of £237-6-1 on which to manage.

In the spring of 1920 the first meeting of the newly formed Parochial Church Council was held, and the Electoral Roll at that time had a total of 840 names qualified to elect councillors. The main function of P.C.C.s was to assist the Rector in his spiritual work and also to look after Church Funds, which had hitherto been in the hands of the incumbent and Churchwardens. The work of the restoration of the Church was now seriously considered and several skilled and unskilled workmen sent in their names for voluntary labour. To help forward this work a new fund was inaugurated known as ' The Penny-a-day " Fund and over £27 was brought in to the secretary in one month in February 1921.

There is a note in that year of a very special Choir outing to Exeter. There was singing to the accompaniment of an English concertina and a vesper was sung outside the Rectory at 11-15 p.m. as a fitting " good night " to the Rector.

News came through of the death of one of the Rector's sons, Cuthbert Buxton Lancaster who was Assistant Superintendent of Police, Malalpuram. He served in the Great War (1917-1918) in the 28th London Regiment where he was twice wounded, and was killed in action at Pukkattur during the Mappilla Rebellion on 26th August, 1921, at the age of 22.

There was also a Week of Prayer and Gift Day held during 1921 and the welcome sum of £319-16-6 was received

towards the restoration work. During the work of restoration the services were held in the Alexandra Gardens and were continued in the Weymouth Pavilion because the work was still not completed.

The death of Mr. Isaac Dennett occurred this year. He had been verger for 26 years, and was a man of God who in his sphere laboured for the Gospel. The Mayor of Weymouth attended his funeral service.

April 5th, 1922, was a great day of rejoicing for St. Mary's on the occasion of the re-opening service following the work of restoration. The sun shone throughout the day and there was gladness at St. Mary's and great joy. Massed choirs of the town attended the service and the anthem by Stainer, " O Clap your hands " was sung. There was also the dedication of memorial gifts ; the Holy Table in memory of Cecil Walter Burt, the Chancel in memory of William Bowles Barrett; the lighting in memory of John and Clara Vincent, and the Prayer Desk and seats in memory of Robert Lynes ; a window in memory of Joseph and Anne George, and another in memory of Charles, Sarah Bartlett, and Charles William John Bussell; the Prayer Books in memory of Isaac Dennett, and the Children's Window. The Bishop of the Diocese was the preacher and the collection on that day amounted to £152-3-1. Workmen employed in restoring the Church were provided with tea at George's Restaurant by Mrs. Bowles Barrett, and the choirs were also entertained to tea.

During that year Mr. Bartlett was appointed as verger to succeed the late Mr. Dennett. Unfortunately Mr. Bartlett's death occurred the following year. On June 7th the death of Mr. William Smith is recorded. He was 50 years headmaster of St. Mary's Parochial Schools. Mr. Smith was in great sympathy with the work of the Church and his salary ranged from £80 to £120 per annum during that period. He refused to accept increases when he knew the position of Church funds.

On October 8th the Rev. J. A. G. Ainley was appointed curate at St. Marv's. He had been an officer in the Durham

Light Infantry during the war and was the son of the Rev. F. W. Ainley who had attended the Weymouth Convention over the past twelve years.

September 30th, 1923, was Gift Day which produced the encouraging sum of £368-4-6. An appeal was made by Miss Lancaster for 100 gifts of £5 each for the Restoration Fund as £2,500 was still needed. There were additional evangelistic services held during that summer at the Alexandra Gardens Theatre and the Vaudeville on the sands.

March 9th, 1924, was the day of the unveiling and dedication of the splendid War Memorial on the south side of the Church. This was unveiled by Major R. D. T. Yerburgh, M.P., and the alabaster tablets commemorated the names of 100 men of Melcombe Regis Parish. The memorial was the gift of the Ancient Order of Foresters. A tablet was also unveiled on that day in memory of Cuthbert Buxton Lancaster by Mr. Ainley, the curate.

There was a particularly happy occasion for St. Mary's when the marriage took place of Mr. Ainley to Miss Lancaster. Mr. Ainley later became an outstanding Evangelical leader in the Church of England. The Rector that year carried out a chaplaincy to a British community in Spain and we find the first mention of the " Continental Sunday " in a letter which he sent whilst abroad. In these years Mr. Lancaster was very much concerned with the founding of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society and the organisation of the annual " Keswick " Convention in the Queen's Hall.

July 12th, 1925, marked the 400th anniversary of William Tyndale's gift of the New Testament in English, and on October 16th there was a day of intercession about Prayer Book revision which was beginning to disturb many evangelicals at that time.

An amount of £8.000 had already been collected for the Church Restoration Fund but £600 was still needed. Mr. Lancaster frequently stated in his appeals that " he gives twice who gives quickly!"

April 18th to 26th, 1926, was the occasion of Mission services conducted by the Rev. C. F. T. Parsons, Missioner of the Church of England Evangelistic Mission. Mr. Parsons had served in the Royal Marines and his Mission was greatly blessed in Weymouth. There were in fact converts of the Mission in 1883 present.

One of Christ Church members, Mrs. C. M. Bedford, of 102 Newstead Road that year celebrated her 100th birthday. Her father was Company Sergeant Major William Bligh who was in the Battle of Waterloo, and received the freedom of the City of Canterbury. She was photographed wearing the Waterloo ribbon on May 7th.

Historic ecclesiastical boundaries were formed in 1926 when Radipole became a separate Parish, and we find in August of that year Weymouth had a heat wave and there was a considerable outbreak of measles in the town which again caused the closure of schools. St. Mary's funds were reduced by £150 because of the separation of the Parish.

It was remarkable to read of the strong force of choir boys in those days. Some 28 of them were taken on an outing to Bournemouth. Mr. J. A. Staple, an outstanding choirmaster and organist always had a waiting list of boys to join St. Mary's Choir. He received an honorarium of £15 for his services in 1928.

In September. 1928, Mr. J. Stafford Wright, B.A., was appointed as curate and in that year the Campaigner movement was started in St. Mary's Parish. Mr. Wright was a gifted preacher and teacher and in later years became Principal of a Theological College at Bristol.

Question Sundays were introduced in 1929 which proved to be very popular. The questions were^ sent in and answered by the Rector and Mr. Wright. We find that the price of the magazine was again increased to 2d. There was also the outstanding town Mission at the Alexandra Gardens Theatre

conducted by a fiery Irish Presbyterian Evangelist, the Rev. W. P. Nicholson, from December 1st to 22nd inclusive. There were many conversions and Mr. Lancaster heartily supported this effort.

Church finance still needed to be kept to the fore. The electoral roll now contained 1,004 names, and the Rector estimated that if members paid Id. a day for their religion, the sum of £1,300 would be forthcoming. This figure appears to have been reckoned on weekdays only.

In 1931 Mr. *C.* W. Catchpole, a member of St. Mary's Choir, was accepted as a Missionary candidate. Also during that year owing to an emergency, £350 was quickly raised to save our Day Schools.

Mr. Lancaster's ministry was now running to a close and he accepted the living of Little Leighs, Essex. He possessed a rich bass voice and often spoke of St. Marv's Choir as " my Choir." He was a great man of God who loved his work and his people. Tribute must also be paid to his beloved partner, Mrs. Lancaster, who was a humble Christian lady and helped forward the work in many ways, particularly in founding a Women's Sunday afternoon Bible Class which continued for many years after her departure from Weymouth.

CHAPTER VII

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY PART II

Rev. William Grist, M.A.	(Instd. 1932)
Rev. Thomas William Graham, M.A.	(Instd. 1936)
Rev. Earle Legh Langston, M.A.	(Instd. 1939)

The arrival of the Rev. W. Grist as Rector in 1932 brought to St. Mary's a young, vigorous, experienced man, who was exceptionally gifted as a Bible Teacher and expounder of Holy Scripture. He was already well-known as a Convention speaker and was a keen prophetic student and frequently lectured for the Advent Testimony Movement in many parts of the country. Mrs. Grist also was a talented lady and shortly after settling in at the Rectory she reorganised the Sunday Schools and had weekly preparation classes for teachers. She built up a strong Women's Fellowship, and in addition formed a Girls' Christian Fellowship, and within a few months she had some sixty girls on the Roll. Mr. Grist was soon joined by the Rev. John Penrose, B.A., as his curate, and in the short time of Mr. Penrose's stay at Weymouth he was greatly used of God in influencing many young men to become keen and active Christian workers. He had a special gift of friendship and many of his personal contacts were made at the tea table at his lodgings in Ranelagh Road. He had formed the habit of regularly having young men to tea each Sunday and the effect of his ministry at St. Mary's will long be remembered.

During 1933 the death occurred of Mr. S. S. Milledge who had served as a churchwarden over a period of 44 years. Mr. Grist banded together the sidesmen who met for prayer on the first Sunday of each month. Mr. Harry Smart, one of the young men, was the first of several to leave for training for the ministry, and he entered St. John's Hall, Highbury, and later became a missionary in North Africa. The death occurred that year of Miss Drew who had for some sixty years served as a teacher and Sunday School superintendent.

In 1934 Miss Iris Critchell took up training for missionary work with the B.C.M.S., and later went to China in which sphere she served for many years and was prevented from leaving by the Japanese during the 1939-45 war.

There was tremendous activity amongst young people in those days and there were many who were keen to proclaim the Gospel in the open air and elsewhere. Mr. Grist used to speak of his " twenty curates" who supported him on Sunday nights in the summer on Weymouth sands. Services of Gospel witness were also held following evening services at St. Mary's Mission Hall and at Christ Church School Room, the services being entirely conducted by the

young people themselves. Furthermore there were weeknight open air services held in various parts of the Parish and there was no lack of helpers.

During 1934 the Rev. Lionel Fletcher conducted a Town Mission at Maiden Street Methodist Church from December 1st to the 10th when St. Mary's workers played a prominent part in all aspects of the evangelistic effort.

Following the departure of Mr. Penrose to take up a living in the north of England Mr. Grist invited the Rev. R. P. Johnston, who had recently served in the Royal Navy, to become his curate. Mr. Johnston also proved to be an enthusiastic leader particularly amongst young people, and in recent years has been a strong supporter of the evangelical cause at Convocation and Church Assembly and in many other places where evangelical standards needed to be upheld.

May 6th, 1935, saw Silver Jubilee celebrations of King George V and Queen Mary and there was a special service of thanksgiving. Commencing from June 28th there was a students' evangelistic campaign conducted by young men from the B.C.M.S. College at Bristol; another of St. Mary's young women, Miss Winnie Lemon, gave up a teaching career and sailed for Burma as a missionary under the auspices of the B.C.M.S.

During that year Mr. Bert Biles was nominated as Mayor of Weymouth in which capacity he exerted great influence for good in the town, particularly so with regard to the work of the Weymouth and District Hospital. Mr. Kenneth Prior, another of the young men, also entered training for the ministry at the B.C.M.S. College at Bristol. The end of 1935 proved to be a bitterly cold winter and unfortunately the Church heating system broke down. The services continued, if perhaps somewhat abbreviated, and one well remembers the Rector standing in the pulpit wearing a leather jerkin ! However, the heating was restored in remarkable time by Messrs. R. Crumbleholme & Son.

In February 1936 the death occurred of King George V. King George had read a chapter of the Bible daily as promised to Queen Alexandra since 1881. He was a well loved and respected monarch. St. Mary's heard with deep regret that year of the Rev. W. Grist accepting the living of Holy Trinity, Tunbridge Wells. His ministry had a reviving effect upon the work in the Parish and many were stirred to deeper devotion as a result of it. The large congregations present at that time are a never-to-be-forgotten memory of those still surviving who derived lasting benefit through the labours of this great servant of God.

The Rev. T. W. Graham was appointed Rector to succeed Mr. Grist and commenced his ministry in 1936. He had left a thriving work at Guildford and was a much older man than Mr. Grist whose pulpit ministry had been of exceptional quality. Mr. Graham was shortly joined by the Rev. B. H. Wainwright as curate who was an active and well-liked young man.

On November 18th there were celebrations to mark the death of Charles Simeon in 1836. St. Mary's has been a Simeon Trust Church since 1882. During that year Mr. N. C. Hill was appointed organist at St. Mary's, which appointment followed shortly after the death of Mr. J. A. Staple who had been organist and choirmaster for 22 years. No man worked harder than Mr. Staple to build up and train a men and boys choir, and there was

great loyalty and a sense of pride among all who were considered good enough to find a place in St. Mary's Choir. It is of interest that one of his sons (Mr. Jack Staple), has been and still is closely connected with work amongst Boys' Clubs in Weymouth.

May 9th, 1937 was a great occasion as the Coronation of King George VI was celebrated, and during that year the Rev. B. H. Wainwright was accepted for missionary service with the Church Missionary Society and was preparing to work in Africa. There was a missionary farewell for Miss Iris Critchell in August who was about to sail for China.

It is of interest to note that at the Annual Church Meeting some 200 parishioners were present.

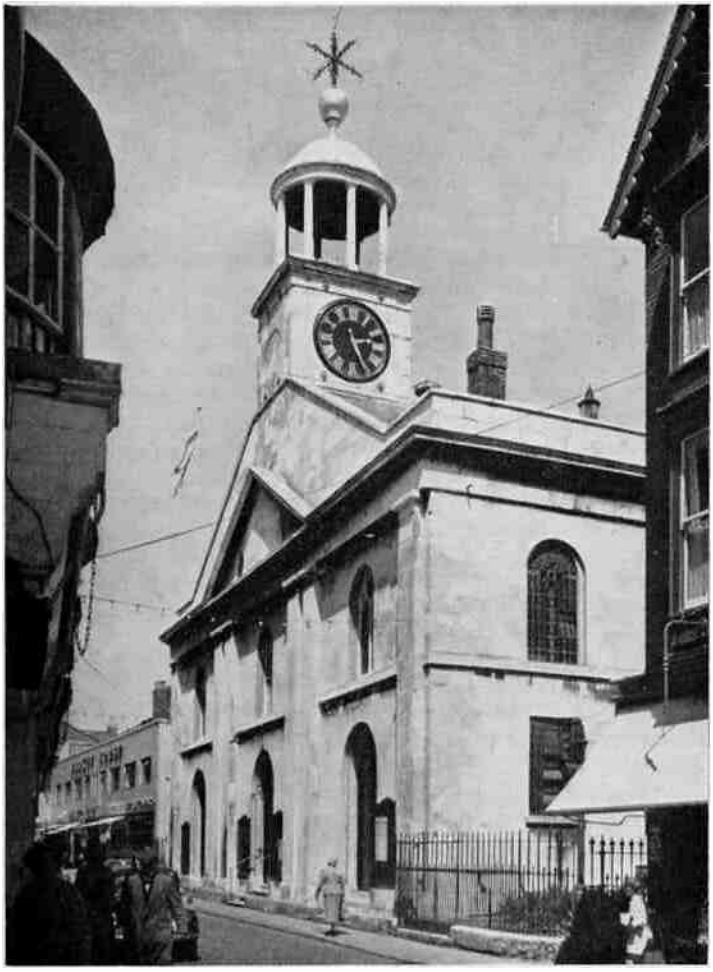
In 1938 a new curate arrived in the person of the Rev. C. G. St. C Tisdall who later offered himself for missionary work with the C.M.S. in India.

During Mr. Graham's ministry a new work was commenced by the young people at the Weymouth Poor Law Institution where services were held in the wards each Wednesday evening with the goodwill and appreciation of the Rev. C. A. Plaxton, Vicar of Holy Trinity. One well remembers humorous incidents at some of these services usually led by Mr. Ted Hatton. Without apparent thought, a service commenced with the hymn, " I am a stranger here, Heaven is my home."

In June that year there were thanksgiving services for the English Bible which had now been our national heritage for 400 years.

A new Rector was appointed at the time of the outbreak of war in 1939, and St. Mary's had the privilege of the ministry of the Rev. E. L. Langston, M.A., another gifted Bible expositor who had travelled widely, was conversant with several languages and was a keen student of prophetic truth. He had written a number of books on the subject and had lectured widely. In his boyhood days he had been a member of Prebendary Askwith's Bible Class at Hatcham who himself had been Rector at St. Mary's in 1903. Mr. Langston arrived at Weymouth at a difficult

time and it could be said of him that as Churchill was a rock to the nation of Great Britain, so was Mr. Langston to the spiritual life and the maintenance of moral courage in the face of danger in Weymouth. He was faced with financial deficiency at the Church and under his leadership the Church once again attained a sound financial foothold which has continued throughout the years. Mr. Langston gave much prophetic teaching and had a remarkable insight into prophetic interpretation, particularly



Si. Mary's Parish Church | 1967) —exterior

in the book of Daniel and Revelation. He saw through the evil of the day and held no sympathy with the oppressors of freedom, and the terrible sufferings of Jewish people was a matter constantly in his prayers. He introduced the Church Hymnal as the standard hymn book in 1939.

At the outbreak of war Mr. Langston commenced daily prayer meetings open to all Christians in the town, and in 1941 wrote, " The past year has been grim and trying for us all. Many times the enemy visited the town working havoc and sorrow in many districts. The daily meetings for prayer have been maintained. God has been most gracious in answering prayer and delivering us from the power of the enemy."

The Rev. A. F. Abbott became his curate and did splendid work whilst here and his home was an ever open house to young people. The Rector and Mr. Abbott were always amongst the first to be present when there were bombing incidents in the town. Mr. Abbott left to become an organizing secretary for the Church Pastoral Aid Society and later became Vicar of St. Simon and St. Jude, Southsea. In 1941 the Rev. K. C. Cooper arrived as the replacement curate and although hampered by poor health he was a great influence for good in the work of the Parish.

March 15th, 1942, was "Dig for Victory Sunday," and it is recorded that on April 3rd (Maundy Thursday) the town had a most distressing air raid. A large amount of damage was done all over the town, and especially in St. Nicholas Street and St. Thomas Street. There were broken windows in Church ; Miss Taylor, headmistress of St. Mary's Infants' School and her mother and Col. Paul her fiance were killed. They were due to be married on the Easter Sunday. The Church also sustained the loss of Mr. and Mrs. F. P. Old who perished in an air raid together. Mr. Old was an ex-Police Sergeant and a member of St. Mary's choir.

Mr. Langston also became a part-time Chaplain to the Royal Navy and had regular services early on Sunday mornings for sailors. On February 17th, 1944, there was a memorial service to old boys of Weymouth Grammar School who had died in the war.

On November 4th a gramophone and loudspeakers were installed in the bell tower for suitable records to be played. This had a cheering effect in those dull days of the war. St. Mary's

learnt with sorrow following the invasion of Normandy of the death in action of Mr. Kenneth J. Willis whilst serving with the 5th Dorset Regiment; he had already been recommended to receive the Military Medal for bravery. He was a keen member of St. Mary's choir.

April 16th, 1945, was the occasion of a memorial service to President Roosevelt and at that time many American service personnel were stationed in and around Weymouth. May 12th saw a great day of thanksgiving for victory in Europe. The last of the war-time prayer meetings was held on June 23rd, and Mr. Langston wrote, " God has wonderfully heard and answered our daily prayers since the war broke out and has comforted us daily." On the declaration of peace with Japan on August 15th, a service of Praise and Thanksgiving took place at 1 a.m. in the morning. Thus ended a period of great anxiety and privation and St. Mary's people were thankful for such a spiritual leader raised up by God at the right time as they recollect the courage and believing faith of the Rector.

Mr. Langston, mainly for reasons of age and health, felt obliged to resign the living in 1947 and went into retirement at Bournemouth. He had finished his course with honour and respect at Weymouth. Miss Beryl Langston, one of his daughters had become married to Dr. John Webb, a medical missionary in China, and she returned with him to the field. Dr. and Mrs. Webb are still working in the far east. His other daughter, Miss Hilda Langston, was at that time serving as a missionary in Ruanda.

Other young men who went into the ministry from St. Mary's during Mr. Langston's incumbency were Mr. S. W. Scriven who entered St. John's Hall, Highbury, and Mr. F. P. Sprackling who went to the B.C.M.S. College at Bristol.

Before the appointment of a new Rector, St. Mary's was privileged to have the services for six months of the Rev. J. K. Page, M.B.E., who had recently completed war service as a Chaplain in the Royal Air Force. Mr. Page during his brief stay endeared himself to the people of St. Mary's whatever their age or social position. We remember with gratitude particularly his special ministries to the sick and aged members of our

congregation. He spared no effort in his resolve to bring comfort and cheer to the many who by reason of their years and afflictions were unable to gather with us at the Sunday services. His energy in general Parish visitation was most pronounced, and many bereaved families have also expressed the value of his sympathetic ministry.

We recall also his frequent visits to the Bible Classes, and his active interest in the work of the Young People's Fellowship. The Sunday School likewise held a warm place in his heart, and his delightful talks to the children will never be forgotten. Mr. Page later became Vicar of Greyfriars' Church, Reading, and his ministry has been abundantly blessed of God.

Another of St. Mary's young men, Mr. G. B. Bridgman, went into training for the ministry at the B.C.M.S. College, Bristol. He has been Vicar of St. Mary's Parish Church, Crawley New Town, Sussex, and is now Rector of Hull.

In the history of this period mention must be made of Mr. H. F. Wield whose unflagging work amongst young men has been outstanding. In addition to this, his enthusiasm for the missionary cause has resulted in generous support for God's work overseas.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (PART III)

Rev. Maurice Heath Garner, M.A. (Instd. 1947)

On July 18th, 1947, the Rev. M. H. Garner was inducted as the new Rector of St. Mary's. He had recently held a living at Whittle-le-Woods, in Lancashire, and had previously served as a missionary in the West Nile district of Uganda with the Africa Inland Mission. Needless to say the new Rector brought with him a continuance of missionary enthusiasm which was no new feature at St. Mary's, and he found many friends at Weymouth ready to support him in any move for the furtherance of the Gospel overseas.

Commencing in October, 1948, an evangelistic campaign continued for seventeen days at St. Mary's conducted by Mr. Peter Elford and Mr. Arthur Gove. This campaign was well supported and was a spiritual uplift for many young people in Weymouth. A memorial service was held on October 30th in memory of the 29 young Naval men who lost their lives in a boat which left Weymouth harbour on the night of October 17th to return on board H.M.S. " Illustrious." The Bishop of Salisbury gave the address at the service.

September 13th, 1950, was the day of the dedication of the Borough War Memorial and Book of Remembrance which can be seen in the chancel and on that occasion the Bishop of Sherborne was the preacher. The Book of Remembrance contains the names of Weymouth men who gave their lives for their country in both World Wars, and included the names of many civilians who died as a result of air raids during the 1939-45 War.

During that month St. Mary's Mission Hall was re-opened. It had been taken over for war emergency purposes in 1939. Also in that year Mr. Edward Cornick returned to St. Mary's choir following war service. Mr. Cornick had served in

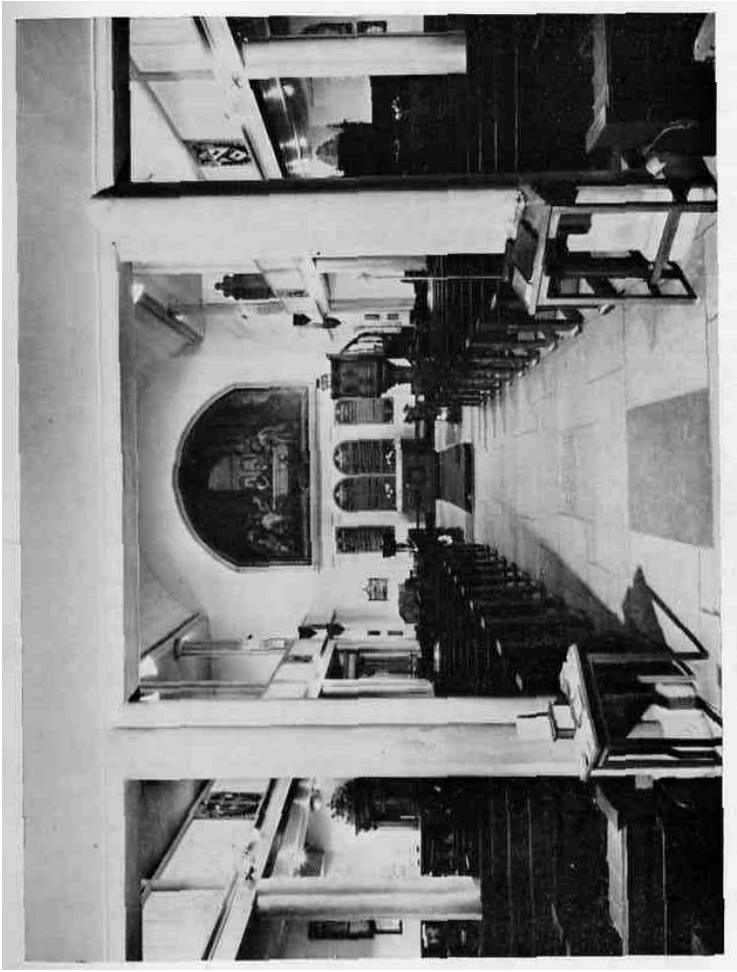
the Army as a radio operator in France and was awarded the " Croix de Guerre." He later served in Burma where he was awarded the Military Medal.

In December, 1951, the dedication of two silver Chalices, the gift of Miss Sarah Bessie Bussell took place. These are frequently used at the smaller communion services.

February 6th, 1952, was a sad day for Great Britain on the occasion of the death of King George VI. He was well-loved of his peoples and always sought to uphold Christian standards. Elizabeth II was proclaimed Queen on February 8th.

May 12th to the 15th was set aside for Convention meetings at the Church led by the Rev. and Mrs. F. Noel Palmer. These meetings were well-attended and proved to be of great blessing to many. During that year owing to constant damp in the choir vestry the roof was renewed, and this had in fact presented quite a problem to the architect for some time.

For some years the re-building of the organ had been anticipated and the Church owes very much to Mr. S. S. T. Davis, a life-long member of the choir, who by his personal drive and sheer hard work devised schemes for money raising. Sufficient was forthcoming for the work of re-building to commence, and the dedication of a two-manual organ took place on May 27th, 1953, by the Rev. J. A. G. Ainley, a former curate. Four years later as a result of an unexpected



legacy of £1,000 the choir manual was added, making St. Mary's organ the most up-to-date electric-action instrument in Weymouth. The work was carried out by Messrs. J. W. Walker, the well-known organ builders.

On May 31st the Coronation service of the Queen took

place. On September 25th the Rev. Derek Green arrived as the first Curate to assist the Rector. Mr. Green served the Parish well, and was a great influence amongst young people. Covenanter Classes for boys and girls were started in Advent of that year.

1953 was a year of great upheaval at St. Mary's, as in addition to the re-building of the organ, the whole church was redecorated, the work lasting tor nine weeks. Workmen worked until mid-day each Saturday, and thanks to many willing lady helpers who laboured most faithfully with dusters and polish on Saturday afternoons, it was possible for all the services to be continued.

September, 1954, saw another Parish Mission led by students from Tyndale Hall, Bristol, and also in that month a presentation was made to Mr. Ernest Bussell on his retirement from duties as churchwarden, Mr Bussell had served for many years in this capacity. In April, 1955, during the visit of Dr. Billy Graham, there were relays to St. Mary's from Glasgow. Mr. Green left in October to become a Chaplain in the Royal Air Force. In 1956 Alderman Bert Biles, who had been awarded the O.B.E. for his public services, was given a presentation for his long and faithful service at St. Mary's Church.

A new colleague, the Rev. Derek Osborne, arrived to replace Mr. Green in December 1957. Mr. Osborne was the first curate to occupy the newly acquired curate's house at 10 Alma Road, and proved to be both popular and gifted as a preacher and Bible student. On his marriage at a later date St. Mary's had the privilege of Mrs. Osborne's help as an experienced worker among girls in the Parish. Mr. Osborne eventually took a second curacy with the Rev. G. B. Bridgman at Crawley New Town, Sussex, and has since become Vicar of Christ Church, Croydon.

During that year St. Mary's bade God-speed to Mr. and Mrs. Tony Berry and their family who left for work at Vom Hospital in Northern Nigeria under the auspices of the Sudan United Mission. Mr. Berry was a qualified chemist.

It was decided in 1958 that the Mission Hall bell formerly given by Dr. Moorhead in 1883 which had been lying unused for

many years would be a welcome addition to an African Church. This was then cased up and sent to a needy Church at Arua in the West Nile district of Uganda.

In May of that year very long-delayed electrical work was carried out and the whole Church building was re-wired following the receipt of another useful legacy which seemed to be made available at a very necessary time.

1958 also saw celebrations to mark the 700th anniversary of Salisbury Cathedral, and in that year St. Mary's were able to offer visitors a concise History of the Parish Church which had been a long felt need.

In 1960 St. Mary's received with regret the resignation of Mr. J, E. Daubeney for health reasons. Mr. Daubeney had been the organist for fifteen years and his quiet manner and worshipful playing of the organ helped considerably the well-known enjoyable services at the Parish Church.

Upon the retirement of Mr. S. T. Parsons after fifty-four years service as teacher and Superintendent at St. Mary's Sunday School a presentation was made to him in February. Mr. Parsons loved children and was a genius in handling them and gaining their attention. He also faithfully visited the sick in connection with the school, and built up a lasting fellowship amongst the teaching staff. One recollects a former scholar of the school, Mr. Raymond Knell, who entered training for the ministry and has been serving as a Vicar in the north of England for some years.

On September 18th, a fine blue chancel carpet was dedicated for the use of the Church. This was in memory of two former devoted members (Mr. and Mrs. Richard Smith), and was given by members of the family. Smaller carpets were provided by the Women's Fellowship under the inspiration of Mrs. F. C. Charles and Mrs. G. Biles.

February 8th, 1961, was the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Weymouth Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society when a special service was held. During June there were again relays to the Church from

Manchester of the Billy Graham Crusade.

In August Mr. J. E. Wycliffe-Jones, M.A., F.R.C.O., an experienced and well-qualified organist was appointed to succeed Mr. Daubeney, and a tribute was paid to Miss N. K. Wield who had been deputy organist for over twenty years. Miss Wield has a reputation for faithfulness and loyalty to the Church and very seldom missed attendance at services.

During September of that year the Rector was made a non-residentiary Canon of Salisbury Cathedral, with the Prebend of Yatesbury, and his duties now take him frequently to Salisbury as Chairman of the Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship and for other committee work.

In October the question of Christian Stewardship was seriously considered by the Church Council and a modified scheme to increase the finances of the Church was brought into being.

On May 20th, 1962, the 300th anniversary of the 1662 Prayer Book was celebrated at St. Mary's.

A delightful letter was received by the Rector at that time from an African, the Rev. Benoni Obetia, a Uganda clergyman who had recently visited Weymouth. It reads as follows :—

" My Dear Father and Mother, Mr. and Mrs. Garner, Sisters Recili and Margaret and Brothers Rechard and Martin.

I greet you in the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart. I am very glade today when I think ail goodness which I had because Weymouth wose my home like Vura here in West Nile. Will you send my greetings to all frinds, specially Christians in St. Mary's Church. Tell them that I am still thanking God for have nice time with them in Weymouth and in your church and wonderful! worship which was there.

Now we keep on praying for Uganda's Independence and that God may guide His Church safely. This letter is Christmas greeting.

My wife thanks English ladies very much for keeping her husband fat. Now he is thin again because too much work and no English porridge.

Thank you dear Sir, Your bedien
servant." " Benoni
Obetia."

1963 saw the advent of a really arctic winter throughout the country and the cold spell lasted from January 13th until March 8th. On arrival at the Church on the first Sunday it was impossible to see the Church steps as the snow was piled high against the doors. It took some time for the verger, with the help of the Rector and his son Martin, to gain access to the Church, and on the Sunday morning at the 11a.m. service only thirteen people braved the elements. The Church thermometer showed no mercury registration for weeks, and in the Church Services Register the fictitious signature of a seasonable preacher " J. Frost " can be seen.

In June of that year an additional stop was included in the organ. This was the two-foot block flute on the choir organ. In the autumn there was a parochial visiting campaign organised with a series of uuest services in an effort to reach people living in the Parish with a view to bringing them into the fellowship of the Church.

During 1964 Canon Garner was elected one of the Proctors to represent the diocese of Salisbury at Convocation and Church Assembly, and in that year an appeal was made for £3,000 for essential Church repairs and the money was forthcoming in remarkable time. The death occurred at that time of Mr. A. C. Wade who had laboured for many years in the Sunday School and was a leader of the Children's Guild, and a presentation was made to Mrs. E. Critchell after twenty-three years as leader of St. Mary's Sewing Party. Mrs. Critchell was instrumental in raising hundreds of pounds over the years in support of necessary annual Church expenses.

A great Civic service was held on January 31st, 1965, in

memory of Sir Winston Churchill when a large congregation was present.

There was much satisfaction in October of that year when the Church installed an oil-fired boiler which proved to be entirely satisfactory during the ensuing winter months. No one was more pleased with this modern innovation than the Verger who had man-handled over 300 tons of solid fuel during a period of nineteen winters.

Two fine oak psalm and hymn boards were dedicated during that month in memory of a much loved and respected member of the congregation, Mrs. Rose Sprackling. The Rector was in that year made an honorary life governor of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

In March, 1966, at long last, the renewal of the Church railings on the north side of the building was completed. These had been damaged during the 1939-45 war, and the Church authorities were grateful to the Weymouth Corporation for their part in effecting a real improvement to the frontage of the Church. By the onset of winter another necessary repair job was carried out in the complete overhaul and re-slating of the Church roof, under the supervision of Mr. Colin Crickmay who has had the oversight of all building repairs for many years.

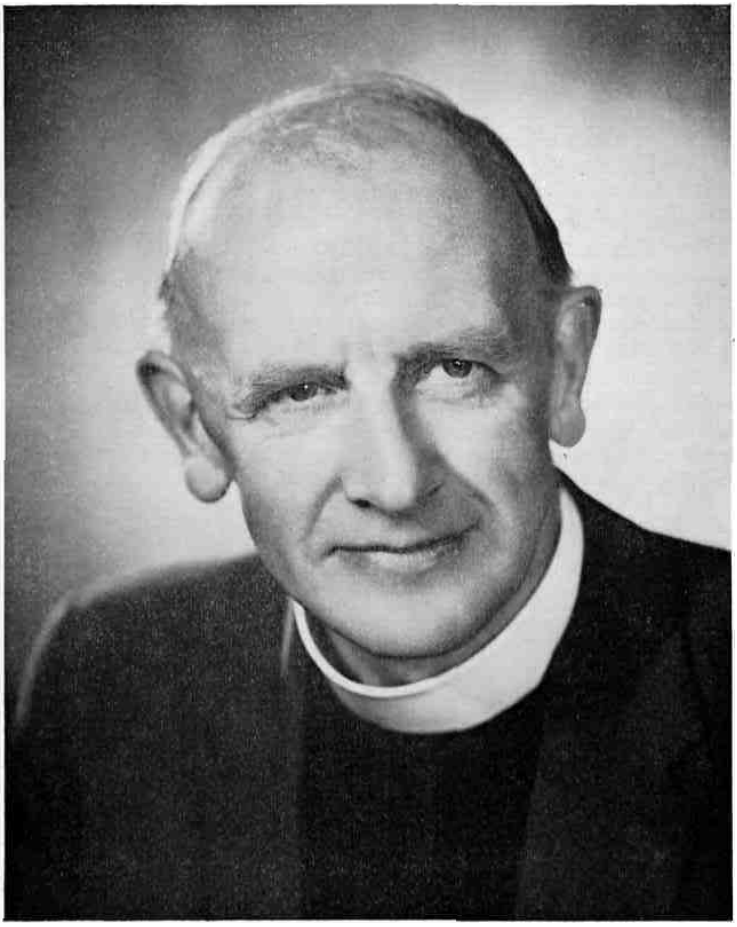
As the record of the 150lh anniversary draws to a close mention must be made of young men of St. Mary's during the incumbency of Canon Garner who have heard the call to full-time Christian service in the ministry of the Church. Mr. Desmond Stockley took up training at St. John's Hall, Highbury, and is ordained. Mr. Martin Garner was ordained this year and is working in Northern Ireland, and Mr. Richard Luther and Mr. Andrew Woodsford are in training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, and Tyndale Hall, Bristol, respectively.

St. Mary's is now set in a rapidly changing world, when new methods and modern means are required to be incorporated into the work of the Christian Church. However, the need of the Gospel is still the same Because the human heart will continue to

remain unchanged without the gracious work of the Holy Spirit of God.

Rectors of Melcome Regis cum Radipole

	Instit.
Thomas Wyndham, D.C.L.	1809
Charles Bridges, M.A.	1849
Talbot A. L. Greaves, M.A.	1856
John Hubert Scott, M.A.	1881
John Lovell Gwatkin Hadow, M.A.	1889
Charles Askwith, M.A.	1903
Thomas Lancaster, M.A.	1910
The Joint Benefice of St. Mary, Melcombe Regis and St. Mary, Radipole, was severed on June 8th, 1926. Thomas Lancaster became Rector of St. Mary, Weymouth	1926
William Grist, M.A. .	1932
Thomas William Graham, M.A	1936
Earle Legh Langston, M.A.	1939
Maurice Heath Gamer, M.A.	1947



Rev. Canon M. H. Garner, MA. (Rector 1947-